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RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2109
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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2007

In Today's Papers

Foreign Minister Gul Reiterates Support for Changes to Article 301
All papers report that speaking at a joint press conference with his visiting Australian counterpart Alexander Downer, Gul reiterated that he and the PM wanted this law, which makes it a crime to "insult Turkishness" amended, because this law hinders Turkey's reform process. However, interference of Americans or Europeans in the issue would make completion of the task impossible. Gul was quoted as saying "this is not an issue for Americans or Europeans, it is our issue. It is damaging Turkey's image. It is portraying Turkey as a country where hundreds of journalists and intellectuals are jailed for their speeches. This is wrong. We want everyone to freely express their thoughts as long as they don't incite violence or amount to insults." Meanral Buyukanit Comments on Northern Iraqi Officials
Milliyet, Sabah, Vatan and others: Pri/r to his official talks in the US, Chief of Geeral Staff General Yasar Buyukanit said that thQ Kurdish administration in Northern Iraq has made hostile remarks against Turkey and that it is not possible to meet with them under current circumstances. The comments of Buyukanit came in response to a question about the words of Turkish counterterrorism envoy retired General Edip Baser who said that he could meet with KDP leader Barzani if it is would benefit Turkey in the fight against the PKK. Buyukanit stressed that there is no change in the policies of the Turkish Armed Forces regarding the fight against the PKK. Turkey's interlocutor in counterterrorism is the central authority in Baghdad, Buyukanit added.

Turkey-US to Establish "Joint Production Zone"
Hurriyet reports Turkish union of chambers (TOBB) chairman Rifat Hisarciklioglu said after hosting a dinner on Friday for US Assistant Secretary for economy Dan Sullivan and US Trade Representative Kristal Alley that the Turkish side has agreed with the Americans on a "Joint Production Zone" project. The joint trade launch will be a substitute for the "Qualified Industrial Zone" project between Turkey and the US which had been shelved five years ago due to disagreements over textile products. The new project aims at enabling Turkey to export goods to the US without customs tariffs and quota limitations. "American goods will be used partly in the production phase in the new model which will result in significant increases in Turkish exports to the US," Hisarciklioglu said, adding that Turkey needed to expand its humble amount of 0.03 percent in the huge US import market. Hisarciklioglu noted the agreement to be signed between the two countries had to be approved by both the US Congress and Turkish Parliament.

The PKK Suspected of Controlling Drug Trafficking to Europe through Turkey
Hurriyet reports Turkish narcotics police seized 565 kg of heroin on February 8 and 220 kg of heroin stashed in 29 coffins in a truck at Kapikule bordergate on February 11 in the northwestern city of Edirne. Together with the 258 kg of heroin recently seized in Istanbul on tip-offs coming from Germany and Belgium, Turkish police confiscated the largest haul of narcotics in the nation's history, totaling 1043 kg and worth USD 51.6 million. Turkey is now seeking the drug baron behind t massive shipment destined cites the French Le Parisi

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Milliyet, Cumhuriyet, Radikal and Yeni Safak report that some PKK defectors have been recruited to serve in the "Kurdish brigades" dispatched to Baghdad for security operations in the Iraqi capital. Kurdistan regional administration president M to Launch Oil Exploration in Eastern Mediterranean, Aegean

Cumhuriyet and Milliyet report that Turkish petroleum company TPAO

plans to begin oil exploration in the eastern Mediterranean and Aegean Seas. The papers see the decision as "retaliation" against Greek Cyprus oil exploration attempts in the eastern Mediterranean. TPAO will explore Turkey's Mediterranean coast for oil, and then turn to the area between the west of Cyprus and Egypt. The papers say TPAO is to announce an international tender in a few months.

Editorial Commentary on US-Russia, Iran
Haluk Ulman observes in the economic-political daily Dunya:
"Russian leader Putin's speech at the Munich conference demonstrated the mistrust in Moscow regarding President Bush's policies. Putin clearly slammed the US policy for establishing a global hegemony and accused the US of restarting a nuclear arms race and ignoring the United Nations on international affairs. This was the bitterest language against Washington by Russia in an international platform so far. In his speech, Putin signaled his search for an alternative to the solo polarized world order. For some observers, Putin's speech can be taken as the start of a new kind of cold war era. I see Putin's speech as an effort to gain a bigger role and more influence in the international arena as he is comfortable with both internal politics and his domestic economy with the help of \$300 billion of oil reserves. Putin was giving a clear message to Washington: 'don't dare to implement policies which I don't agree with, particularly in my backyard.'

Melih Asik argues in the mainstream Milliyet: "The US strike against Iran is a matter of time now. Washington is pursuing the same tactic, disseminating lies, as it did prior to the Iraq strike. The newest lie is about Iran providing weapons to Iraqi insurgents. This lie was not even accepted as a fact by some of US senators, like Chris Dodd and Ron Wyden. They also noted that the administration is repeating the same scenario for Iran now as it staged for Iraq before. On the other hand, the Bush administration seems very determined to divert attention to Tehran and eventually launch a strike against Iran with the hope that it will cover up the failure in Iraq. There is a growing anti-war movement publicly in the US especially after the lack of a strong stance against the war would stand up and be vocal against the American plans to strike Iran. Q

Editorial Commentary on the Possible US Armenian Resolution
Hurriyet chief editor Ertugrul Ozkok comments on how Ankara reached Congressman Tom Lantos to seek his assistance to prevent the adoption of the Armenian resolution at the US Congress through the Israeli Ambassador in Turkey, Pinhas Avivi, who called Shimon Peres to convey the Turks' request. "Peres called Lantos, who might now sit on the resolution at the Foreign Relations Committee. Turkey and Armenia could take action for rapprochement and Armenia would agree to take some initiatives. A high-level Yerevan official said, "If we come out and say such things and if Turkey does not take a

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step, the government here will fall." ... I wonder whether Azerbaijan's strong oil lobby in the US and is doing anything to prevent the resolution."

Mehmet Ali Birand observes in the mass appeal/sensationalist Posta that unless there is a last minute change, the Armenian resolution will be adopted by the US House of Representatives. "The best result would be postponing the bill to next year, but it's still possible to prevent it. The Bush Administration opposes the resolution, but it will not be influential. ... The key to preventing the resolution is still with Turkey, but it would require bold steps -- such as the possibility of Turkey sitting at the negotiating table with Armenia without preconditions but initially keeping the bordergate closed, repeating its call for establishing a council consisting of international historians, and amending or annulling Turkish Penal Code Article 301. ... If Turkey continues to repeat its simple nationalist rhetoric, Armenians might not be able to dictate its demands to Turkey but they definitely would to the entire international public. Turkey must act rationally."

Hasan Cemal in the mass appeal Milliyet asks whether or not the US has heard what Hrant Dink used to say: "I'm appealing to Armenians of the Diaspora. They should not demand either from Turkey or any other country that they should accept the genocide. The main issue is the democratization of Turkey, which is more important than Turkey recognizing the genocide. Only a democratized country can relax and agree to come to terms with its history and discuss its problems with empathy." Cemal concludes that the US must have lost its mind if it is the resolution without it writes in the lib ey along with the US. On the one side is Turkey's interests concerning Iraq, the PKK and Armenia, and on the other demands for Turkey to participate actively in the alliance forming for sanctions on Iran. I predict that Ankara is standing closer to the idea of participating in the sanctions against Iran."

Husnu Mahalli of the tabloid/sensationalist Aksam asks Turkey to seek ways of direct dialogue with Armenia. "Ankara could surprise everyone by saying before April 24 that the decision dated April 24, 1915, to move Armenians out was wrong and that it felt sorry for the deaths of Turkish and Armenian citizens along the way. This won't mean admitting guilt, on the contrary, would be regarded as a demonstration of virtuousness."

Ali Bayramoglu writes in the Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak that one could regard the Dink murder as a bitter phase of the process in which Turkey faces its history and identity. "This encounter pushed the suppressed memory back to the surface. The main factor beneath the nationalist wave that spreading in Turkey today is the tension between those who want to face history and Turkish identity and those who oppose it. ... Facing its history will liberate the Turks."

TV Highlights
NTV, 6.00 A.M.

Domestic News

- Murdered Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink's widow Rakel called on the office of the prosecutor to file a complaint against officials for failing to prevent the assassination and their conduct of the investigation. One person has been detained in the central Anatolian city of Kayseri for sending email threats to Agos newspaper.

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- Joost Lagendijk, co-chairman of Turkey-EU joint parliamentary commission, said that the lives of all suspects facing trial for violations of article 301 were at risk.

- Deputy Prime Ministers were sent to the region.

- Swedish historian Professor David Gaunt has responded to a Turkish proposal for joining the excavation of an alleged Armenian mass grave found in Mardin by saying the sides first needed to agree on the excavation methods.

International News

- Explosions ripped through two marketplaces in downtown Baghdad yesterday, killing at least 80 civilians.

- Tehran rejected the charges of US Defense Secretary Robert Gates that Tehran played a role in supplying Iraqi insurgents with sophisticated explosive devices.

- Iraq's supreme criminal court upheld the death penalty against former Iraqi Vice President Taha Yasin Ramadan for the mass killing of Kurds.

- EU foreign ministers have approved Monday implementing UN sanctions against Iran.

- Israel decided to suspend road building work near the Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem.

<http://www.state.gov/p/eur/ankara/>

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